

In a strong community, when a family  
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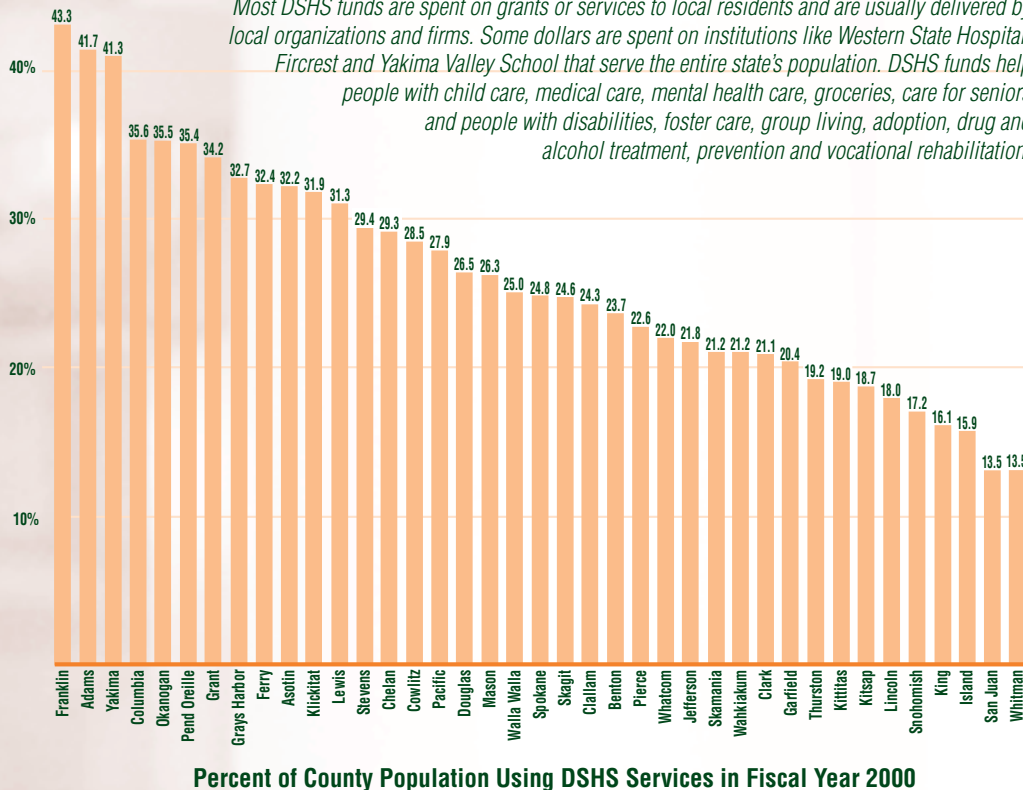
# Community

Communities are the next best thing to families - and that is saying quite a lot. In most neighborhoods, there are networks of parents whose kids play together, go to the same schools, and need rides to the same games. There are company picnics where families share tips on discipline and favorite recipes, and local town halls where citizens hash things out with city officials. There are local charitable organizations that provide positive activities for kids, business clubs that promote the ethic of community service, and volunteers who tutor young students. In a strong community, when a family falters, there is a powerful back-up system that protects kids. There is also a complex, democratic process underway that is constantly shaping the future of the community and its people.

**Healthy  
communities  
help reinforce  
healthy families**

## Residents in all Washington counties use DSHS services

*Most DSHS funds are spent on grants or services to local residents and are usually delivered by local organizations and firms. Some dollars are spent on institutions like Western State Hospital, Fircrest and Yakima Valley School that serve the entire state's population. DSHS funds help people with child care, medical care, mental health care, groceries, care for seniors and people with disabilities, foster care, group living, adoption, drug and alcohol treatment, prevention and vocational rehabilitation.*



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**Fostering Economic Vitality** • Communities are also networks of private enterprises and public agencies that provide jobs, create wealth, and foster innovation and technological progress. Economic vitality is a critical ingredient of healthy communities, and human services play a multi-faceted role in fostering it.

Consider the cases of two Washington counties. In Yakima County, 41.3 percent of the population receives one or more DSHS services. The total value of these services is \$396 million. In Pierce County, 22.6 percent of the population receives services with a total value of \$785 million.

The economic value of these services percolates throughout the local economy. Grocery stores, hospitals, doctors, child care providers, and community organizations all benefit. So do employers whose workers rely on DSHS help to pay for child care and health insurance.

**Washington's First Communities** • DSHS is also helping Washington's first communities - its 29 federally recognized Indian tribes - to become more autonomous. In 1989, Washington state signed the Centennial Accord, which established the principle of a government-to-government relationship between tribes and the state. This covenant has transformed the previously adversarial relationship between the state and tribes, and, over time, is replacing it with intergov-

ernmental agreements that foster mutual respect, cooperation and recognition of the treaties signed with Indian peoples.

Recognition of the right of tribes to self-government has also been growing in the federal government. This has set in motion a long-term trend towards tribes creating their own institutions rather than being dependent on services provided by the state or federal governments. More tribes are developing their own child welfare systems, their own programs for caring for elders and people with disabilities, their own alcohol and drug treatment programs, and their own systems for providing temporary help to needy families.



Photo by Debbie Preston, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission



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This is an enormous shift in the relationship between the state and the tribes, and an enormous boost to the tribes' continuing progress in re-establishing their sovereignty and rebuilding the tribal structures and traditions essential to their identity and their future prosperity. Many DSHS programs and administrations are negotiating new, government-to-government agreements that turn program authority and funding over to tribal governments. DSHS also provides technical assistance to tribes to help them develop expertise in both providing services and creating fiscal and management structures. The result is a healthy growth in tribal self-sufficiency, and the creation of programs that are culturally appropriate for the communities they serve.

**Keeping Communities Safe** • DSHS also plays a growing role in protecting all of Washington's communities from crime. The criminal justice system and the human services system converge in programs to rehabilitate both juvenile and adult offenders, many of whom are mentally ill.

DSHS's Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration houses the most difficult juvenile offenders in three institutions, one forestry work camp, and in a private basic training camp, and supervises them when they are paroled. This enormous responsibility requires the simultaneous pursuit of two goals: turning young lives around, and keeping communities safe. It requires working closely with county juvenile justice systems. In addition, it requires addressing the complex needs of young offenders for mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, the development of moral reasoning skills, education and job training.



Photo courtesy Family Policy Council

## Risk and protective factors for children: Communities are key

*Research shows that children are more likely to get into trouble as teenagers if they live in communities where people move in and out constantly, where guns and drugs are available, and where extreme poverty is common. On the other hand, stable, safe communities that provide children with opportunities for success and recognition and clear standards for healthy behavior protect children from getting into trouble when they become teens.*

Community Risk Factors	Teenage Problem Outcomes				
	Substance Abuse	Delinquency	Teen Pregnancy	School Drop-Out	Violence
Availability of drugs	X				X
Availability of firearms		X			X
Community laws and norms favorable toward drug use, firearms and crime	X	X			X
Media portrayals of violence					X
Transitions and mobility	X	X		X	
Low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization	X	X			X
Extreme economic deprivation	X	X	X	X	X

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An "X" means that two or more rigorous studies followed specific children for many years and determined that these risk factors, early in life, were related to the identified problem behavior later in life.

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DSHS's Mental Health Division has also been assigned a vital role in community protection: it oversees the Special Commitment Center, which was established by the Community Protection Act of 1990. The Center houses and treats sex offenders with mental abnormalities who have completed their prison sentences. Offenders receive specialized mental health treatment designed to prevent them from re-offending when they return to the community. Although only three percent of sex offenders being released from prison qualify for this mental health treatment, what happens to them is of intense interest to every community in Washington state.

The safety of people in our communities also depends on workers from the Adult Protective Services, Child Protective Services, and community mental health professionals, who protect children and vulnerable adults from harm. These workers don't ride on shiny trucks with lights and sirens, but their work is every bit as vital and life-saving as firefighters, police, and Medic One.

**Mayor Barbara  
Larsen leads by  
example.**

Photo courtesy The Daily News, Longview



Castle Rock Mayor Barbara Larsen oversees police and public works departments and does all the other things mayors do. But she also brings foster babies to city council meetings. For 38 years Larsen has served as a foster parent working with DSHS's Child Protective Services. During those years, she has cared for 200 to 300 babies who are sick or addicted to drugs such as heroin and cocaine.

Read the complete story in *The Daily News, Longview* posted on the Internet at: Facing the Future Profiles, located at <http://www.wa.gov/dshs/FacingtheFuture/NewsProfiles>

# Community

To protect communities and reduce the suffering of the mentally ill, the Mental Health Division is also working with county governments to find better ways to treat mental illness. There is a growing recognition that untreated mental illness is a major contributor to the cost of local criminal justice systems. So is untreated alcohol and drug addiction. Thus, in both these areas the human services system plays a vital role in achieving the goal of community safety and, at the same time, helping to hold down the cost of local police, jails, and courts.

**Human services alone – indeed, government alone – can never be a substitute for local citizen action to create healthy communities**

**An essential Ingredient** • Washington's diverse communities are complex systems of people, businesses, religious faiths, schools, local traditions, private charities, self-help organizations, service clubs, sports teams, media, elected officials, and government agencies ranging from the local coroner's office to the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Clearly, the human services system is only one component of what makes a community a good place to live, work and raise a family.

Human services alone – indeed, government alone - can never be a substitute for the civic-mindedness, personal responsibility, and stewardship by local citizens. But high quality, culturally appropriate, efficient and cost-effective human services are an indispensable ingredient in the recipe for safe, healthy, sustainable communities.



Photo courtesy Family Policy Council

